COUNTRY BRIEF: TANZANIA

Joint program on Unpaid Care, Disability, and Gender Transformative Approach

The global multi-country programme, funded by the Global Disability Fund aims to promote an intersectional approach on care and support systems. It seeks to understand and address the multiple barriers faced by women and girls, including those with disabilities, in achieving economic justice and accessing **necessary services** to choose, live independently and be fully included in the community. The programme will be implemented for 24 months (2025 and 2026).

This programme aims to transform care and support systems to advance gender equality and address women's time poverty. It also seeks to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the support services they need to exercise their right to live independently and to participate fully in society and their communities. In doing so, the programme emphasizes the importance of recognizing the interdependence between caregivers and those who require care.

Implemented by: UNDP, UN Women, ILO International Labour Organization, UNFPA, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, unicef

Funded by: Global Disability Fund

Why Tanzania?

➡ Gender disparities dominate unpaid care and support

Entrenched gender roles continue to shape women's participation in both unpaid and paid care work, with cultural expectations often positioning men as breadwinners and women as responsible for domestic and caregiving tasks. According to the 2022 SIGI Country Report, women spend over three times as much time as men on unpaid care and domestic work. More than 60% of the population believes that tasks like cooking, cleaning, and laundry are women's responsibilities.

➡ Care and support is often provided informally and not recognized as work

Care work, whether paid or unpaid, remains largely informal and undervalued. Most care workers, predominantly women, lack formal recognition and regulation, limiting their access to training, professional development, and advancement. Women in paid care roles often earn less and receive less recognition than men. This reflects a broader societal undervaluation of care work and reinforces gender inequalities across economic and social domains.

➡ Community-based care and support services

Community-based childcare centres exist in some areas, and some caregivers have received formal training. The Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) provides cash transfers to vulnerable households, including those with persons with disabilities. Gender policies adopted in Zanzibar (2016) and Mainland Tanzania (2023) aim to address gender-based violence and improve women's access to resources and economic opportunities.

➡ Growing demand for care and support due to demographic shifts

The 2022 Population and Housing Census reported that disability prevalence among persons aged seven and above rose from 9.3% in 2012 to 11.2% in 2022, with women experiencing higher rates (7.8%) than men (5.7%). Persons with disabilities face numerous barriers, including underrepresentation in policy processes, limited stakeholder awareness, stigma, discrimination, and poor access to essential services, particularly in rural or underserved areas. Public and private infrastructure remains largely inaccessible, and access to inclusive education, specialized healthcare, rehabilitation services and livelihood opportunities is limited. A lack of comprehensive, adequately funded care services undermines independent living and personal autonomy.

➡ Expansion of the care and support national system

While Tanzania does not yet have a national policy on unpaid care work, several policies and programmes address care-related issues. The National Social Security Policy 2003 supports vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities and older persons. Under its Generation Equality Forum commitments, Tanzania has pledged to recognize unpaid care and domestic work in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), expand social protection, and invest in care-related infrastructure such as water, clean energy, and childcare services.

The creation of a comprehensive national care and support system would improve the access of care providers and persons with disabilities to care and support services, by consolidating the existing programmes, reducing service overlap and/or gaps by defining specific budgets, and allocating funding to the appropriate agencies and public bodies. It would also improve the rigor of data collection systems to assess its outcomes and impact. In turn, a comprehensive system would also enhance monitoring and accountability in the implementation of existing policies and programmes.

Overall objectives

The programme in Tanzania aims to address the undervaluation of care and support work, predominantly carried out informally by women, by promoting its recognition as legitimate, valuable employment with fair pay and decent working conditions.

It seeks to enhance the autonomy, dignity, and agency of persons with disabilities by ensuring equitable access to quality care services and fostering their meaningful participation in society. By generating robust qualitative and quantitative evidence, piloting innovative service models, and developing practical policy recommendations, the programme drives systemic change to reward and formalize care work, improve its quality, promotes a cultural transformation towards elimination of gender discrimination and negative gender social norms around care and shifts societal perceptions, ultimately advancing equity and inclusion for women caregivers and persons with disabilities.

How will we do this?

i) Pilots and guidelines

UNDP will pilot a care georeferencing tool in the Dodoma Municipal Council in partnership with SHIVYAWATA, the national federation of OPDs. This tool will collect real-time data on care service supply and demand, map accessibility and transportation barriers, and identify service gaps. The pilot will be conducted through ongoing consultations with OPDs, and findings will inform both local service provision and national policy development, offering capacity-building and evidence-based recommendations for potential replication in other areas.

ii) Assessments and mapping

To support the implementation of the pilots and generate updated evidence that reflects the perspectives of persons with disabilities, caregivers, service providers, and government actors, a series of studies will be undertaken. These include a comprehensive review of national and local care and support policies

Photo: UNDP Tanzania

to assess their alignment with disability inclusion, complemented by consultations with government and civil society stakeholders. A mapping of care and support services will also be conducted to identify service gaps, disparities, and access issues to produce actionable recommendations. In addition, a qualitative assessment of the needs and experiences of persons with disabilities in relation to unpaid care and support will help shed light on barriers to independent living and equitable access to essential services. A detailed gender assessment will examine the rights, well-being, and lived experiences of women unpaid care workers, including women with disabilities, to better understand prevailing gender norms, time poverty, and the specific needs of care workers in relation to their well-being and economic empowerment. In parallel, a dedicated study will analyze the risks of gender-based violence faced by women and girls with disabilities in unpaid care relationships, to strengthen protection systems and inform targeted policy responses.

iii) Capacity building

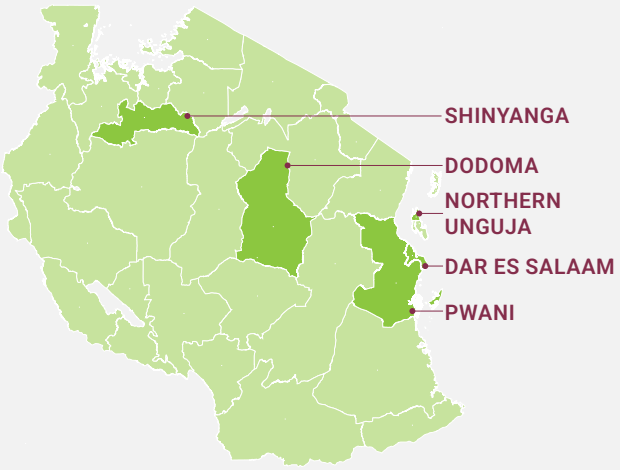
Raise awareness activities and training for public civil servants of territorial entities and organizations of persons with disabilities. Under this programme, the OHCHR developed a training on care and support based on experiential learning to foster knowledge-sharing and exchange of experiences. Over the course of three modules, the training covers the fundamentals of the care and support agendas, the transformation of conventional care systems, the 5R approach to care, and key policy priorities for a disability-inclusive care agenda.

iv) Advocacy and public policy dialogues

The programme will organize participatory workshops with users of care and support systems, particularly adolescent girls and young persons with disabilities, to help articulate their requirements and ensure these are adequately reflected in local inclusive care management models. These workshops will prioritize lived experience to ensure that services are accessible, inclusive, and effectively responsive to expressed needs. The qualitative data gathered and insights from pilots and assessments will inform evidence-based guidelines for disability-inclusive and gender-transformative care and support systems. This evidence will directly feed into policy dialogues between government, OPDs, and service providers, ultimately helping shape the design and implementation of the national disability policy and ensuring that proposed options are both realistic and actionable.

Location of activities

The programme will cover both mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, with national-level studies and policy work. Specific assessments and pilot initiatives will be implemented by UNDP in Dodoma Municipal Council. UN Women will lead targeted mapping activities in Pwani and Northern Unguja, Zanzibar. UNFPA will conduct an assessment of the risks of gender-based violence faced by women and girls with disabilities in unpaid care relationships in Shinyanga and Dar es Salaam.



Who are our partners?

Government

Prime Minister's Office- Labour, Youth, Employment and Disabled Persons (PMO-LYED)

First Vice President's Office in Zanzibar

Zanzibar National Council for Persons with Disabilities (ZNCPWD), First Vice President's Office in Zanzibar

The Office of the Government Chief Statician (Zanzibar)

President's Office – Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG)

Ministry of Health (Mainland and Zanzibar)

Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups (Mainland)

Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women, Elders and Children (Zanzibar)

Ministry of Finance and Planning in Mainland and Zanzibar

National Bureau of Statistics

The Parliament of Tanzania

Women's organizations and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPD):

Tanzania Federation of Disabled People's Organizations (SHIVYAWATA) Women Wing

Zanzibar Federation for Persons with Disabilities (SHIJUWAZA)

Organization of Women with Disabilities Zanzibar (JUWAUZA)

Movement of Women with disabilities in Tanzania (MOWADITA)

Voice of Disabled Women in Tanzania (VODIWOTA)

Tanzania Legal for the Blind (TLB)

Tanzania Federation of the deaf - CHAVITA

Tanzania Albino Society (TAS)

Zanzibar Association of persons with Alibism - ZAAO

Tanzania Association of Mentally Handcapped - TAMH

Tanzania Users and Survivors of Psychiatry Organization – TUSPO

Zanzibar Association of Disabled

Tanzania Association of the Deaf-Blind

Tanzania Media Women's Association – TAMWA

Tanzania Gender Platform Network – TGNP

Country contact

Ghati Horombe, Programme Coordinator in Tanzania, UNDP Tanzania.
Email: ghati.horombe@undp.org

The UN Joint Programme on Unpaid Care, Disability, and Gender Transformative Approach has been funded by the Global Disability Fund.

Global Disability Fund